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Serial No. 10/735,504

JUL 07 2006

Docket No. 129234-1

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the consideration shown by the Office as evidenced by the Office Action mailed on April 10, 2006. In that Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-33. Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration in light of the following remarks.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1-33 under 35 U.S.C. §103(c) as being unpatentable over Rock (US 5,181,826) in view of Walden (US 6,089,825). Rock describes radial distortion of an annular casing of a gas turbine engine during service, generally into an elliptical shape. Rock also describes a shroud support configured to attenuate the radial distortion from a mounting flange transmitted to a shroud hanger. Rock does not discuss coatings disposed on the casing or shroud. Walden describes a turbine assembly comprising a shroud substrate on which an abradable sealing layer is disposed, as a means to minimize leakage in the turbine assembly.

The combination of references cited above fails to teach, suggest, or disclose all limitations recited by the rejected instant claims. In particular, the combination fails to fairly suggest a coating having a thickness that varies as a function of circumferential position along said inner surface of said base component, as recited in independent claims 1 and 18; further, the limitation of disposing a coating having such a thickness profile, recited in instant claims 19 and 33, is not fairly suggested by the combination. The Examiner maintains that the motivation to minimize leakage would make obvious a coating having such a thickness profile. However, Applicants respectfully note that Walden itself actually teaches away from coatings having a thickness that varies with position. In the two places in the reference discussing coating thickness, Walden explicitly states that the thickness of the abradable coating should be uniform. See col. 5, lines 6-10; Id., lines 50-54. One skilled in the art, upon reading this reference, would not be motivated to design a coating having a non-uniform thickness, such as the coating recited in the instant rejected claims. Absent such a motivation to combine, the combination of references is improper and there can be no *prima facie* case of obviousness made out against the instant claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-33 are patentably distinct over the applied references, either singly or in combination, and respectfully request reconsideration.

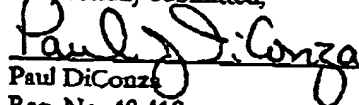
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In light of the remarks presented herein, Applicants believe that this serves as a complete response to the subject Office Action. If, however, any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,



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